

Advice for the sensible walker

LET SOMEONE KNOW

Take the trouble to let someone know that you intend to go walking, which route you intend to take and the approximate time at which you expect to return. Make sure that the weather conditions are favourable...

EQUIP YOURSELF PROPERLY

Wear sensible footwear : shoes that support the ankle can spare you from sprains. Take warm clothing : you could be surprised at how cool it is at nightfall, even in high summer.

FOLLOW THE OFFICIAL WAY-MARKING

Continuation of the footpath —

Change of direction =

Wrong direction X

RESPECT THE COUNTRYSIDE

Don't wander off the way-marked path where it crosses obviously private property, don't light fires, don't leave rubbish and don't camp. Have respect for wild animals and plants, farm animals and crops.

Thank you... and good walking!

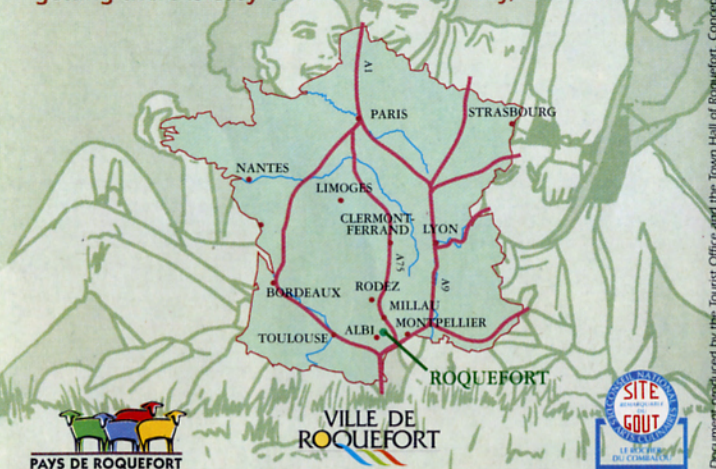
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Rescue centre - fire brigade : Tel. : 18
Emergency ambulance service : Tel. : 15
Police : Tel. : 17

FOR ANY FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT THE TOURIST OFFICE :

Avenue de Lauras, 12250 ROQUEFORT-sur-SOULZON
Tel. : 05 65 58 56 00 - FAX : 05 65 58 56 01

Roquefort in the Aveyron :
getting there is easy on the A75 motorway, and it's toll-free.



ROQUEFORT

Waymarked walks



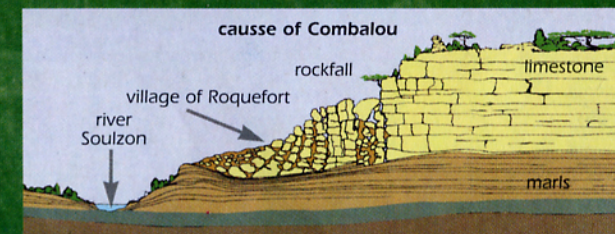
Foot paths



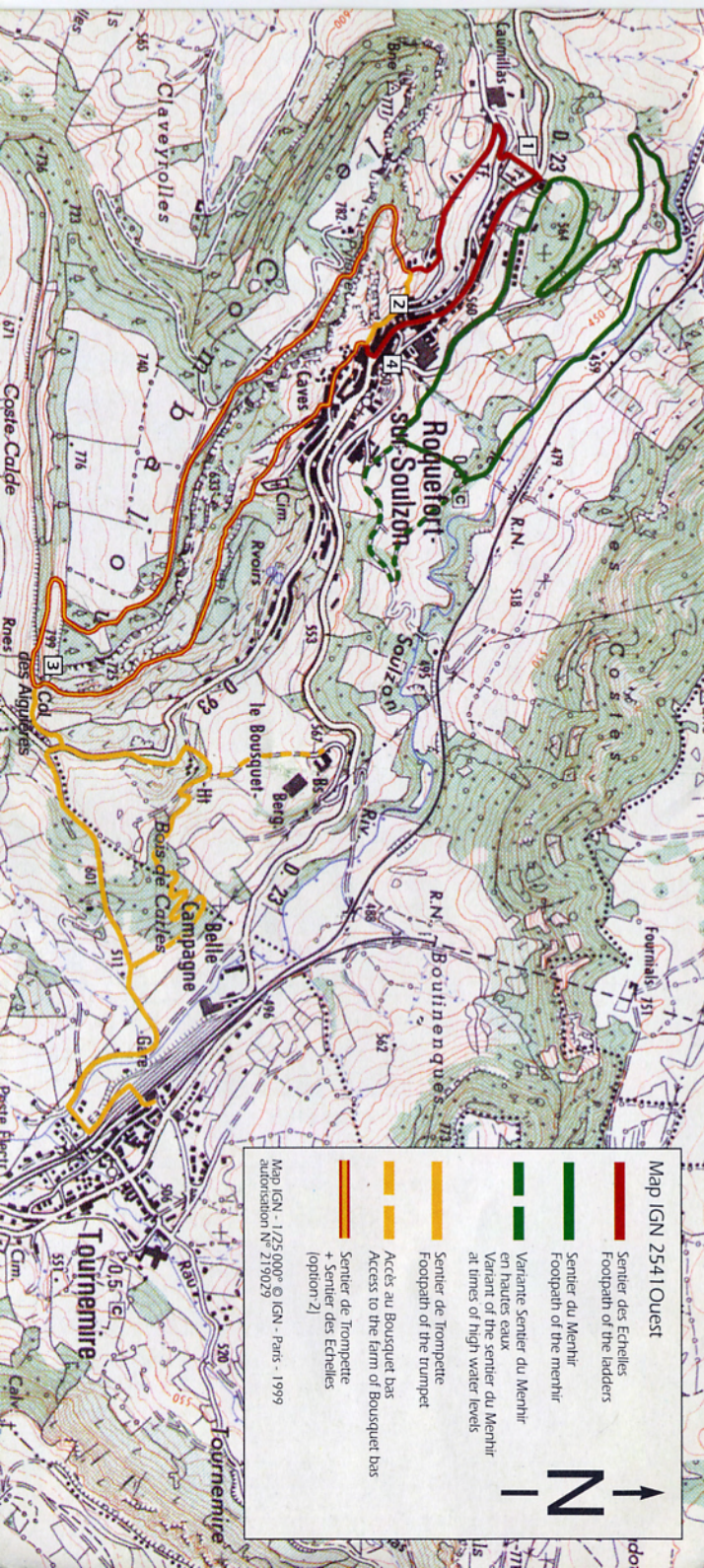
Discovering an exceptional heritage



A mountain had to collapse before the village of Roquefort and its famous cheese could exist. These geological upheavals, due to the erosion of the rock, created a gigantic network of galleries, cavities and heats of limestone rocks. Thus the plateau of Combalou is riddled with faults called "fleurines" that lead from the surface its deepest entrails. Thanks to these fleurines, a draught of cool, damp air circulates underground leading to conditions of constant temperature and humidity.



The plateau of Combalou is very rich in wild flowers. Among the species that you will come across, the cardabelle (*Carlina acanthifolia*) is the symbol of the Grands Causses (huge limestone plateaux of this region).



SENTIER des Echelles

The plateau of Combalou was formerly used as grazing for the flock of ewes from the farm "Mas de Roquefort". The flock passed the greater part of the year there, gaining access to the plateau along 5 km (3 miles) of very bad track. Every day, a farm worker took the shepherd his lunch, using a short cut through the rock fall along the cliff which included climbing two ladders. Hence the name of the footpath.

1 - Opposite the car park of the Tourist Office, climb a path beside the cemetery. Once you have arrived on the tarmac road turn right and then left to pass above the "house of Claveyrolle". 300 metres further on, bear left on to a stony track then pass in front of a house and a drinking fountain (potable water).



2 - Take the little track that climbs towards the plateau of Combalou. On your right is the rockfall : keep left and follow the track which climbs to the "source des Ouassellous" (spring of the birds in the Occitan language). Carry straight on, climb the first ladder, then the second, until you arrive on the plateau. Once there, pass in front of an old sheep house.

Admire the landscape : opposite is the Larzac plateau, to the right the cirque of Tournemire, to the left the valley of the Cernon and immediately below the village of Roquefort.

Walk along the edge of the cliff and take the track through the pine wood, then continue for some time until you reach the track of Pradelles. Turn left and begin the descent.

3 - At the col des Aiguières, take the direction of Roquefort. Continue straight on to Sotch de Balhols (a very big fault in the rock) and descend to the Chapel of Saint-Pierre. Climb the steps on the left to reach the viewpoint diagram.

Go back down the steps to get to the caves of Roquefort and the archaeological museum. Go down the "rue de la Créance" to the "place des Baragnaudes". Take the "rue des Baragnaudes", which climbs up opposite, in the direction of the "Quilles des Baragnaudes" (the Quilles are huge pillars of rock that resemble giant ninepins). Go in front of the Quilles, follow the cliff and descend the steps.

4 - At the bottom of the steps, turn right and immediately left to pass through an arch and get back to the "avenue de Lauras", which will take you to the Tourist Office, your point of departure.

Estimated time : 2 h 30 Altitude difference : 250 m (775 feet)
Distance : 6 km (3.75 miles)

Way-marking :



SENTIER du Menhir

This ramble will be most agreeable on the hottest day of summer, because it leads you to the river Soulzon through a maze of rocks and vegetation. The coolness of the water should induce you to stay awhile beside the river.

The menhir of Soulzon, set on the river's bank, vouches for the presence of Neolithic man in this region and its size (3.5 m = 10 feet, high) certainly commands respect.

On leaving the Tourist Office, turn right and follow the edge of the wood of Conteyne as far as the drinking fountain. Take a narrow track to the right, then traverse the housing estate on the tarmac road. Carry straight on as far as a big green and white building. Leave the building to your right and turn left onto a narrow shady path. At the end of this path, descend to the left as far as the junction with a wider track, turn left again as far as the kissing gates, then follow the river Soulzon as far as the menhir*. For the return journey, cross the river and follow the bank opposite the menhir. Re-cross the river to join a tarmac road. Follow this for 900 m (half a mile) to the wood of Conteynes and take a track to the right leading to the Tourist Office.



*After heavy rain, do not cross the river, but re-trace your steps as far as the wide track. Stay on this track and climb as far as the tarmac road then turn right to re-join the shady path.

The return is, from this point, identical to the outward journey.

Estimated time : 1 h 30 Altitude difference : 110 m (340 feet)
Distance : 3.6 km (2.25 miles) Way-marking :



The plateau of Combalou with the village of Roquefort at its feet, viewed from the cirque

